THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL) (a) and (b) The growth trend for the recent years appears to indicate the beginning of a new cyclical upswing in the economy from 2003-04. The increased growth momentum of the manufacturing and services sectors along with a robust agricultural performance are expected to generate an overall GDP growth of 8-8.5 percent in the coming year.

(c) to (e) The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been discussing the creation of a weighted index of Asian currencies called in Asian Currency Unit (ACU), the proposal involves having a common currency for the countries under Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) with inclusion of India, Australia and New Zealand at a later date. The proposal is under preliminary discussion in the ADB.

Extension of gratuity, family pension in new pension system

112. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to extend benefits of gratuity, family pension and death-cum-retirement gratuity in the new pension system;

(b) whether such a move goes against the earlier objective of the scheme and will dilute the new pension scheme; and

(c) what is the justification for this afterthought particularly when the new pension scheme as envisaged earlier would have freed Government from huge pension liabilities for its staff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) There is no such proposal under consideration of Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

Dearness Allowance due to employees

113. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent to which additional Dearness Allowance and relief has become due to the Central Government employees and pensioners *w.e.f.* 1st July, 2006; and